EPI Update for Friday, November 11, 2011 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- Anhydrous ammonia exposures
- Preventing antibiotic resistance
- New website on safe disposal of needles and sharps
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Anhydrous ammonia exposures

As the fall harvest wraps up in lowa, farmers are applying anhydrous ammonia to their fields. Unfortunately, there have been a number of serious exposures in recent weeks, including one known fatality. Medical providers and first responders should review and updating their local response protocols.

The Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center is available for consultation at 800-222-1222. For more information, refer to the CDC/ATSDR Medical Management Guidelines for Ammonia at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/mmg/mmg.asp?id=7&tid=2. References to share with farmers are also available from the ISU Extension at www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1518D.pdf and from North Dakota State University at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/ageng/safety/ae1149.pdf.

Preventing antibiotic resistance

Antibiotic resistance is one of the world's most pressing public health threats and is compromising the effectiveness of antibiotics. Patients, healthcare providers, hospital administrators, and policy makers must continue to work together to employ effective strategies for improving appropriate antibiotic use – ultimately, saving lives.

To learn more about *Get Smart About Antibiotics* Week (November 14 to 19, 2011) and antibiotic resistance, visit www.cdc.gov/getsmart/healthcare/ and www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/antibiotic_resistance.asp.

New website on safe disposal of needles and sharps

The FDA launched a new website for patients and caregivers on the safe disposal of needles and other sharps that are used at home, at work and while traveling. Share this website with those that use needles and other sharp devices outside of health care settings.

For the safe disposal of needles and other sharps used outside of the health care setting, the FDA recommends the following:

DO:

- Immediately place used sharps in an FDA-cleared sharps disposal container to reduce the risk of needle-sticks, cuts or punctures from loose sharps.
- As recommended by some association and community guidelines, use a heavy-duty plastic household container as an alternative if an FDA-cleared container is not available. The container should be leak-resistant, remain upright during use and have a tight fitting, puncture-resistant lid, such as a plastic laundry detergent container.
- Keep sharps and sharps disposal containers out of reach of children and pets.

- Call your local trash or public health department, listed in your phone book, to find out about sharps disposal programs in your area.
- Follow your community guidelines for getting rid of your sharps disposal container.

DO NOT:

- Throw loose sharps into the trash.
- Flush sharps down the toilet.
- Put sharps in a recycling bin; they are not recyclable.
- Try to remove, bend, break or recap sharps used by another person.
- Attempt to remove a needle without a needle clipper device.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities 2011 Influenza Teleconference:

For Hospitals, Clinics & Laboratories, on Thursday, November 17, 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m., for Clinicians, infection preventionists, clinic staff, clinic directors, public health professionals, laboratory staff, and laboratory directors. Information will be provided on using the information in "weekly influenza surveillance" report, vaccine and antiviral medications update, the benefit of reporting positive influenza tests to SHL and submitting specimens for surveillance and rapid test confirmation, and on other respiratory pathogens in Iowa and tests available.

For Schools, Child Care Providers, on Thursday, November 17, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., for school nurses, school administrators, child care providers. Information will be provided on prevention and control measures, using the information in "weekly influenza surveillance" report, test methods and interpretation of test results, and testing other respiratory pathogens

Pre-registration is required by Monday, November 14, 2011. To register visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/educationoutreach/conferencesevents/influenza/.

Have a healthy and happy and a little bit snowy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology lowa Department of Public Health 800-362-2736